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Beyond Culture: Immigration in Contemporary Quebec

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Beyond Culture:
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Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
Foreword	ix
Introduction	1
Multiculturalism, Convergence and the New Parallelism	1
Macro-Culture, Inequality and Communalization	5
Quebec and Immigration	7
Immigration Issues and Challenges	12
State Management of Ethnic and Ethnolinguistic Relations	20
Conclusion	31
Bibliography	37

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Foreword

In February of 1991 the Economic Council published *New Faces in the Crowd*, a major statement on immigration and immigration policy. It followed this up in May of the same year with a research report entitled *Economic and Social Impacts of Immigration*.

The nature of the social effects of immigration is especially important in the case of Quebec. In the present study, the author focuses on the challenges and issues that immigration raises for Quebec society today. He examines the central importance of the various ethnic and ethnolinguistic boundaries that traverse the Quebec labour market, as well as the relative impotence of government efforts to alter these boundaries. The social tension that characterizes relationships between the various ethnic and ethnolinguistic communities – both immigrant and non-immigrant – is connected with the linguistic insecurity of the French-speaking majority and the constant restructuring of the boundaries of exclusion and inclusion in employment. The author also concludes that debate and analysis focusing primarily on cultural differences to explain the stormy relationships between these communities is inherently flawed.

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Judith Maxwell
Chairman

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the various social problems of Quebec that are linked – rightly or wrongly – to immigration, and to assess the strategies – particularly cultural strategies – developed by the two levels of government to address these problems. The first section of the paper sketches out the basic approach to culture followed by the various governments. The next discusses the multidimensional nature of society in order to place the concept of culture in a larger theoretical context. The third section examines Quebec's situation specifically, including the various social problems that are sometimes linked to the presence of a diversified immigrant population. The fourth section of the paper examines some of the immigration-related issues and challenges currently facing Quebec society. The paper ends with a discussion of issues related to state management of ethnic and ethnolinguistic relations in contemporary Quebec.

Multiculturalism, Convergence and the New Parallelism

What is immediately striking about the issue of immigration in contemporary industrialized societies is that the conceptual space involved is actually quite limited. At first glance, one is overwhelmed by a flood of different and opposing terms, as though in the middle of a battlefield. However, the differences in conceptual terms are actually limited to certain key terms, the most important of which (by far) is *culture*. Attacks and counterattacks are launched in the name of multiculturalism, pluriculturalism, interculturalism, or transculturalism, or in the name of *culture* itself (national or otherwise) and cultural sensitivity. The protagonists may end up forgetting that, on one point at least, they all agree: the problematic social relations at the centre of debate all stem from cultural differences.

To the extent that the conceptual space attempts to incorporate the entire range of contemporary social relations (i.e., to claim that cultural differences are all there is), society as a whole and the various social actors may be described in terms of culture. First of all, in accordance with this conceptual space, there would seem to be two possible types of societies: monocultural and multicultural. They lie at two opposite poles of the spectrum. In the Canada-Quebec context, they correspond to such opposing positions as the traditional multiculturalism espoused by the federal government and – in the later 1970s – provincial monoculturalism, according to which there is, in Laurin's terms, a "unique" Quebec culture that may act as a "foyer de convergence" for the other cultures within its jurisdiction.

It is interesting that both camps hoist their standards in the name of cultural differences. What is remarkable is not only that they use the same concept,

but also that they basically agree on what defines a society (even though, of course, they define it differently). In the case of the doctrine on the uniqueness of Quebec culture, there is a traditional equivalence made between people, nation and culture. This notion of culture is what Simard calls "totalisante" (all-encompassing) [Simard 1988] and what William terms "the anthropological or extended sociological use . . . [indicating] . . . the whole 'way of life' of a distinct people" [Williams 1981, 11]. The same argument can be found in the doctrine of traditional multiculturalism. In this case, however, each immigrant group carries with it and within it its "own" culture, which it hands down to its descendants. In this way, the host society is composed of a number of small "peoples" in the cultural sense, or what Ollivier [1988] called "petites civilisations."

Appearances to the contrary, traditional multiculturalism is more faithful to the "totalisante" formula than the Quebec convergence model. Culture is so all-encompassing in the former case that it can never be escaped, not even by emigrating, not even after several generations. This vision of Canadian society first appeared in the 1960s [see McAll 1990*a*, 165ff]. The report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, published in 1970, did not present a fundamentally multicultural vision of Canada, but rather saw the country as composed of two dominant cultures: Anglophone and Francophone [Canada 1970]. Alongside these two cultures and their associated languages are the multiplicity of languages and cultures characteristic of the various immigrant populations. (Note that the Native peoples were excluded from the Commission's mandate.)

The commissioners saw this cultural diversity as a source of enrichment for "Canadian culture" as a whole. They felt that the process of enrichment should be protected and consolidated. At the same time, they felt it was important that individuals not be cut off from their linguistic and cultural roots through assimilation into one of the two dominant cultures. Rather, the approach should be to encourage them to enter either Anglophone or Francophone society while allowing them to maintain their cultural identity. Thus there is an uneasy compromise in the Commission's report between these two visions of Canadian society – bicultural and multicultural. The political and economic mainstream is presented as primarily bilingual and bicultural, which necessarily implies integration on the part of the immigrant population. Outside this mainstream, however, particularly in such areas as art, religion and family life, the preservation of cultural diversity is to be encouraged.

On the one hand, therefore, we find Canadians who belong to one or other of the two majority cultural and linguistic groups and, on the other, a variety of cultural minorities that are supposed to be integrated and different at the same time. In the early 1970s, this rather ambiguous vision of Canadian society was supplanted by the federal policy of multiculturalism. It must be

acknowledged that this was a time of some unrest between the country's two "founding" peoples. It was perhaps for this reason that Trudeau felt it necessary to replace the vision of Canada as a nation composed of two dominant cultural and linguistic groups surrounded by a certain number of other more or less marginal groups – in other words, the vision put forward by the Royal Commission – by an entirely different vision: multiculturalism within a bilingual framework [Canada 1978, 46]. In other words, the image of Canada divided into two dominant and parallel cultures (and therefore potentially in danger of splitting apart) was replaced by another which envisaged Canada as essentially *multi-* rather than *bi*cultural.

By 1973, Canada was well on the way to becoming officially multicultural with the establishment of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism. The previous year, Prime Minister Trudeau had appointed a minister responsible for implementing multiculturalism policy. His mandate was to promote greater awareness among the population of the "bilingual and multicultural nature" of Canadian society [op. cit., 15]. Over the next five years, the notion of an essentially multicultural Canada provided the underlying logic for the activities of a variety of government departments. External Affairs, for instance, took great pains to present the image of a multicultural Canada abroad; the Canadian Radio-Television Commission published a booklet on multiculturalism in communications, and the Museum of Man reoriented its exhibits to celebrate the newly discovered multicultural nature of Canadian society [op. cit.].

Two years after the 1978 election of the Parti Québécois, this belief in the multicultural nature of Canada's "great ethno-cultural family" [op. cit., 26] had emerged as a recurring theme in a range of activities undertaken by the federal government. Four years later, in 1982, the Parti Québécois government, having already lost the 1980 referendum on sovereignty-association, refused to endorse the new Canadian constitution. The Constitutional Act stated that any interpretation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms must be consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the "multicultural heritage" of the Canadian people [Canada 1981]. In 1988, this particular vision of Canadian society was enshrined in the Multiculturalism Act. In this act, multiculturalism was once again promoted as a "fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity" at a time when the gulf dividing the two linguistic majorities remained as evident as ever. However, this legislation marked a departure from the traditional multiculturalism of the 1970s. Rather than seeing the various communities as a diversified set of cultures with a wide range of historical roots – cultures that needed to be protected and consolidated – there was now talk of cultures that evolved. The vision remained multicultural, but the cultural mosaic had become cultural parallelism, with each culture evolving at its own pace in accordance with its specific nature. There was another important shift of direction in this renewed

multiculturalism. With the increase in non-European immigration came an emphasis on promoting greater public awareness of the problem of racism.

The position adopted by the Quebec government in the late 1970s – cultural convergence – opened an important loophole. If communities could converge in cultural terms, the boundaries between cultures were obviously not immutable and so there could not be "unique" national cultures towards which convergence could take place. This loophole was in effect closed in 1981 with the publication by the Government of Quebec of its action plan, entitled *Autant de façons d'être Québécois*. This action plan emphasized the maintenance and development of cultural communities and their uniqueness, while calling for their integration into Quebec society. This represented a significant move towards the cultural "pockets" found in traditional multiculturalism, towards coexistence rather than convergence.

The approach of supporting coexistence between diverse cultural communities while calling for their linguistic integration into the larger French-speaking community resurfaces in the Quebec government's policy statement on immigration, *Énoncé de politique en matière d'immigration*, which was released in 1990. Having recognized multiculturalism-style cultural diversity, the provincial government was now intent on promoting "intercultural" communication. As in the new federal policy, however, the different cultures supposedly making up the new Quebec pluralism were conceived as dynamic and open to the future, not rigid and unchanging. There was no longer any idea of convergence or of a multitude of isolated, closed-in cultures; instead the theme was cultural parallelism where each culture was considered free to pursue its own evolutionary course.

Yet all these models – traditional multiculturalism, monoculturalism, interculturalism, and the new parallelism – are more alike than different, in that they all focus on cultural differences as the main determinant of social relations. With the social space within which everything takes place defined as primarily a pluricultural space – although the importance of socioeconomic inequality and racism is increasingly recognized – it follows logically that all relations between groups and individuals will be primarily governed by cultural affiliations. Positive relations are labelled as "culturally enriching," while negative or problematic relations are caused by problems of understanding and awareness. Discrimination, exclusion, racism, unrest in the schools, harassment – in fact, a litany of social problems involved in relations between various segments of the population – are all rooted in the barrier of misunderstanding between different cultures.

By restricting the conceptual space to cultural differences, the entire range of social problems has been subtly reduced to a problem of understanding. Reducing problems in this way does not render all parties blameless, since a

failure to understand implies some degree of blame on either side. However, the fault is a shared one. There are no victims or oppressors, simply a problem with the channels of communication and a lack of understanding. This is the origin of the "intercultural" approach, which strives to be both curative and preventive and to bridge gaps between isolated cultures or parallel cultural pathways in order to resolve all social problems in a society defined as *inherently* pluricultural. Some go so far as to propose a "transcultural" approach in which certain individuals cross the bridges by becoming members of more than one culture.

These models, which are central to both government and academic debate over immigration and host societies, have little to do with societal analysis as traditionally practised in sociology. In the case of government, this choice is motivated by political objectives. For what Laurin calls "national" Quebec culture, there are obvious political reasons for choosing to situate the debate in terms of something Quebecers share – their culture – rather than something they don't – socioeconomic conditions, for example. On the federal side and within the new parallelism at the provincial level, the message is more complicated because the common factor is supposedly that, culturally speaking, there *is* no common factor. Still, the emphasis is comparable, and the political motivation for choosing this approach just as evident. In the present context, the question that comes to mind is whether an analytical model can be constructed that conforms better to the analytical standards of sociology; i.e., placing social relations in a multidimensional social framework, and developing a definition of culture that corresponds better to the particular characteristics of complex modern societies.

Macro-Culture, Inequality, and Communalization

The salient feature of the modern debate over immigration and its consequences is its ahistoric character. Under traditional multiculturalism, the historical roots of competing cultures are certainly recognized, but because they are viewed as immutable and mutually exclusive, theirs is no longer a living, evolving history but a history frozen in time. The new parallelism at both the federal and provincial levels aims to move away from this traditional multiculturalist viewpoint by emphasizing the internal dynamism of different cultures. This risks introducing a new ahistoric component, however, one that sees each society as simply the constantly changing product of a particular set of relations between the multiplicity of its distinct component cultures – which are themselves constantly evolving.

This form of structural functionalism differs from the traditional sociological approaches, particularly those of Weber and Marx, that do not separate the systematic study of social relations from the overall socio-historical context

in which they operate. According to these approaches, each society is a particular system of relations that has two aspects: it is an instance of one of the various types of social systems that can be studied in history, modern capitalism being simply one of the more recent. At the same time, each society has its own character and history. According to the Weberian and Marxist schools of sociological thought, the first step in social analysis is to place the society in question in terms of these two dimensions. At this point structural-functionalist analysis may prove useful, i.e., once the social system in question has been placed in historical space and time.

Curiously, in order to take these two dimensions into account, Weber, too, made use of the concept of culture. This was a very different use of the concept than that we have considered up to now, however. For Weber, there was a difference in cultural terms between capitalism as a system of social relations and the various systems that preceded it (feudal and otherwise). Comparing Germany and Poland at the end of the 19th century, for example, Weber pointed out the cultural difference connected with Germany's more rapid advance towards capitalism [Weber 1988*a*]. This use of the concept of culture is similar to that found in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In this book, Weber established a link between what he called "the spirit of modern capitalism" and "modern culture," the latter imbued with the essence of the former [Weber 1988*b*, 202]. The exact form taken by modern culture, however, varies according to the socio-historical context. Thus each society possesses a cultural specificity related simultaneously to the place it occupies vis-à-vis modern culture and to its own history and composition. This specificity is itself in perpetual change, and it is both the subject of social and cultural research and the framework that conditions how we view society [op. cit.].

The fact that Weber uses the concept of culture in this way does not mean that we have to abandon it, simply that we make more careful use of the two dimensions proposed by Weber, i.e., the dimension associated with the macro-culture of modernity (imbued with capitalism as a system of social relations) and the dimension associated with the cultural specificity of a given social form (taken as a whole) at a particular moment in its history [see McAll 1991]. The first of these dimensions is absent in the cultural theories underlying federal and provincial policies, even though the social relations with which these policies are concerned are strongly influenced by this macro-culture. Weber's second dimension – the cultural specificity of a given social form at a particular moment in its history – appears to be closer to the concerns of the policies discussed here. Since it is cut off from the first dimension, however, the cultural specificity that the various policies attempt to articulate bears only a superficial resemblance to Weber's theoretical framework.

Even with a more careful use of the concept of culture, however, there remain other dimensions to social relations that are only accessible with other

analytical tools. One of the inherent problems with using culture in the Weberian sense is that the concept is still being used to refer to *one* set or *one* system of relations and practices. This concept is not a *relational* one. In trying to understand the social relationships between different categories of actors, using such a non-relational concept means that we must invent other concepts that are relational, such as the conceptual bridge known as interculture. Yet interculture is not really relational either. All it provides is a channel of communication between groups conceived as distinct. Thus the concept of culture must be redefined in relation to others that are better equipped to take into account social *relationships*. In the present context, I will refer mainly to the key concepts of inequality, discrimination, and communalization.

The concept of inequality is relational by definition in the sense that it reflects the difference between two objects or actors according to a certain yardstick. What interests us here is not so much using this concept to describe a static difference between quantities but rather the idea of inequality as a dynamic social relationship between two communities. This conceptual standpoint can be useful in attempting to understand social relations as they relate to immigration, since perceived inequalities give rise to more complaints than lack of cultural understanding.

Since inequality relations are not individual, but collective relations – one experiences inequality *as* a woman or a black or the child of a labourer, not as an individual – we need to develop concepts that can help us to understand these relations between communities. An important concept in this regard is discrimination. A community cannot preserve its privileges without resorting to this means of identification, which involves exclusion and inclusion. A discriminating community creates an identification system to foster and legitimize the inequality relations it wants to maintain ("inherent" superiority and inferiority, for example) and to identify who is included and who is excluded. The construction of such an identification system is part of what Weber calls "communalization" [Weber 1985]. Depending on the circumstances and the nature of the communities involved, the construction of opposing identities may take a variety of aspects (relying, for example, on ethnic, ethnolinguistic, sexist or racist criteria). Whatever the form, however, it is a dynamic *relation* of differentiation, and not simply a statement of difference, as well as an identification relation whose main purpose is to establish social relations of inclusion and exclusion among the groups in question.

Quebec and Immigration: Background

Not only does Quebec society have distinctive characteristics, but it has been experiencing a period of constant upheaval since the 1960s. Immigrants

arriving in Quebec are faced with a school system, labour market, and settlement pattern that reflect ethnolinguistic affiliation and, in the case of the school system, religious affiliation. They are confronted by a patchwork quilt of lines of exclusion and inclusion that are constantly shifting, disappearing and reappearing. They face attitudes of welcome and refusal; they face a constrictive language policy and linguistic practices that seem to contradict it; and above all they face two groups of people at odds over linguistic and class differences at the same time as they are in the throes of profound change. Before describing the place of recent immigrants in this context, I will review some highlights of the changing balance of power between the two majority ethnolinguistic groups.

By all indications, mother-tongue Francophones caught up significantly to Anglophones in socioeconomic terms between 1971-81. In 1971 the Gendron Commission noted that the marked subordination of the French-speaking work force that had been pointed out by Hughes in 1943 was still in place. For instance, the use of French in the workplace was still largely confined to what the Gendron Commission called "low-level tasks" [Quebec 1972], while English predominated, particularly at the managerial level. The consignment of French (and, to a large extent, French-speaking workers) to the lower reaches of the economy was reflected in what Vaillancourt saw as the "marketability" of Francophones' language profile in 1971 [Vaillancourt 1988]. Strongly disadvantaged relative to bilingual and unilingual English-speakers in 1971, Francophones had succeeded in narrowing (and in some cases eliminating) the gap by 1981. This success may be partly attributed to the rapid development of a strongly Francophone Quebec public service [Guindon 1988]. It is noteworthy, however, that the 1970s coincided with the rise of several large financial institutions and major corporations under Francophone control [Moreau 1981]. The percentage of jobs in French-speaking corporations rose in all sectors (excepting private services), while the percentage of English-Canadian-controlled corporations declined in all sectors, without exception [Vaillancourt 1988]. By 1981, therefore, mother-tongue Francophones no longer occupy the generally inferior position that English-speakers had relegated them to up to the early 1970s, excepting the clergy and the professional elite.

Given the greater marketability of Francophones' language profile, it might be expected that allophone immigrants, acting in accordance with economic rationality, would be more inclined to join the Francophone community. Before looking at this question, however, the actual language situation on the labour market must be examined in greater detail. The first important observation is that the increased presence of Francophones in a particular working environment does not necessarily mean increased use of French. Laponce, among others, pointed out the importance of the territorial aspect of language behaviour [Laponce 1987]. A dominant language tends to exercise control

over its territory, whether this territory be geographic or socio-occupational. Its dominance extends to the members of other ethnolinguistic groups that enter its territory. The increased presence of Francophones among upper management and design engineers in the major Montreal-area corporations does not necessarily mean that these sectors of the labour market are becoming more French. Redoing the research carried out by the Gendron Commission in 1971, Monnier found in 1979 that there was an increase in the use of English among French-speaking managers in Montreal even though more Francophones were able to work in French in 1979 than in 1971 [Monnier 1983]. Ten years later, in 1989, Béland once again found this "perverse effect" with respect to the upward mobility and professionalization on the part of the French-speaking work force. While the use of French has increased in the service sector (taking into account the increased purchasing power of Francophones), French-speaking professionals and technicians working in the Montreal private sector used French less at work in 1989 than in 1979 [Béland 1991].

Despite "Francophonization" (i.e., an increased Francophone presence), the actual use of French remains uncertain. Few studies have been done in the workplace; the research of the Gendron Commission, Monnier and Béland was all carried out through interviews and telephone surveys, meaning that the subjects were called upon to assess their own language behaviour. Since 1977, there has been a push for corporate "francization" under the Charte de la langue française, including the issuing of francization certificates. This process has had an impact on bilingualism and, in certain cases, on formal corporate francization, but there is actually little information available on the true language behaviour of the people involved [Maurais 1987; CLF 1986].

Available information indicates that English has lost little of its attraction [see FTQ 1990]. A larger proportion of immigrants arriving since 1971 have been required to learn English in order to land their first job than previously [Monnier 1983]. It should be noted that the increased marketability of Francophones' language profile between 1971-81 applied mainly to *bilingual* Francophones [Vaillancourt 1988]. This observation would seem to be consistent with the advances made by Francophones in socio-occupational areas dominated by English. As international markets open up and Quebec entrepreneurs and researchers become more active on these markets (where English is the dominant language), the Francophone elite in certain sectors may be prompted to move towards bilingualism, if not outright anglicization, in their professional lives.

Clearly, then, the balance of power in language terms is extremely complex. Even though socioeconomic inequalities between the mother-tongue English- and French-speaking communities are tending to narrow over time, the power of attraction of language is not directly tied to their relative weight

as mother tongues, but to their use in the workplace. The obvious gap between official workplace francization and the actual situation on the job [see FTQ 1990] does nothing to help the French-speaking population's feelings of linguistic insecurity. While the immigrant population tends to be held responsible for the accelerating encroachment of English, it can be argued that the sense of insecurity that underlies some anti-immigrant attitudes derives basically from the ambiguous language behaviour patterns of Francophones themselves.

The multiple sources of immigration do nothing to reduce the complexity of the situation in the greater Montreal area. While, generally speaking, we see the same bipolar distribution that once characterized Francophones themselves in the Montreal job market – overconcentration among professional categories on the one hand, and at the lower ends of the employment spectrum on the other [Quebec 1972] – each immigrant group, when classified according to origin and time of arrival, has its own pattern of labour market entry and non-entry [Audet 1987]. Generally speaking, immigrants tend to go where Francophones are absent. Either they are called on to operate the Anglophone community's social and health services [Guindon 1988]; or they are brought over as highly qualified labour ready to work in conditions better and worse than the average – depending on whether they are design engineers or dressmakers, for example – or where non-immigrant workers are unqualified or unwilling to work; or else they are accepted as refugees or in the family category regardless of abilities or training.

Immigrants' bipolar distribution in the labour market tends to isolate them from Francophone workers, something that does not help their integration into the French-speaking world. And this is all the more true in certain English-dominated sectors, such as aeronautics, where immigrants are clustered at the high end of the scale. At the lower end of the scale, there is frequently little or no communication in the workplace; these jobs have what I call high *aphony* [McAll 1990c]. Thus linguistic integration and social integration into Quebec's francophone community – to the extent these two can be distinguished – becomes difficult. The mere fact that immigration is tailored to fill job niches that the existing work force is not available or qualified to fill tends to establish a complementary or parallel distribution between the immigrant and non-immigrant populations and so to reduce contact between them.

In the Montreal area, this complementary distribution of populations on the labour market is reflected in the residential distribution. The upward social mobility of some mother-tongue Francophones since 1971 has been accompanied by a shift to the suburbs north and south of the Island of Montreal and to the predominantly English-speaking municipalities on the west side of the island. In 1981, 53.6 per cent of Montreal's mother-tongue Francophones lived on the island, compared with 75.3 per cent of Anglophones and 83.3 per cent of allophones (neither French nor English) [Paillé 1989].

By 1986, the proportion of Francophones living on the island had fallen to 51.6 per cent, while the Anglophone and allophone figures remained more or less the same. According to Paillé, however, the overall proportion of French-speaking island residents did not change between 1981-86 (at 60 per cent) when other considerations, such as the declining number of immigrants accepted, are factored in. The French-speaking majority is still strongly concentrated in the eastern section of the island (77.7 per cent of the population in 1981), but its representation is growing in the western part (41.9 per cent of the western residents were Francophone in 1981).

As in the labour market, the immigrant population settles according to a residential distribution that is already strongly differentiated along ethnolinguistic lines. Most immigrant groups follow the Anglophone rather than the Francophone community in their residential distribution, with the exception of the French, Haitian, Italian, Portuguese and Latin Americans [Veltman and Polèse 1987]. A recent trend has seen a higher concentration of certain groups of immigrants in an area midway between the two zones (English-dominated and French-dominated). The fact that a particular group is located physically close to the Francophone community (as are residents of Italian extraction, for example) does not necessarily mean that it is close to it in linguistic terms.

The movement within Montreal of the various waves of immigrants between 1920-30 followed the pattern of ethnic succession seen in other major North-American cities [Reynolds 1935]. With the population consolidated into two large territorial blocks differentiated both in linguistic and socioeconomic terms, the residential settlement pattern of immigrants followed a unique pattern. This led Langlois to conclude that the ethnic factor played the main role in Montreal settlement patterns, whereas the socioeconomic factor was the most important in other North-American cities [Langlois 1985].

The existence of residential patterns clearly defined along linguistic and socioeconomic lines likely creates a number of different insertion models. Anglophone or anglophile immigrants gravitate towards predominantly English-speaking areas upon their arrival and take up residence within these zones in accordance with their socioeconomic status. For example, English-speaking immigrants from the West Indies are concentrated in the Côte-des-Neiges and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce areas. French immigrants, on the other hand, can be found mainly east of Saint-Laurent Boulevard. Between the two there is the corridor composed of Parc avenue and the Parc extension, a shared, multilingual zone outside the two main linguistic regions where non-French-speaking immigrants tend to settle. So a pattern of ethnic succession is evident, but it follows distinct corridors according to immigrants' language affiliation. For example, the concentrations of Jewish, Polish and Ukrainian immigrants in various part of the downtown area have declined over time,

with these populations regrouping according to their upward social mobility [op. cit.]. The non-immigrant Francophone population keeps to its own insertion zones and own social mobility corridors. The part of this group at the low end of the income scale is prominent in what is often called the inverted "T" of poverty, which follows the subway lines along the north/south and north-east/south-west axes (although the south-west arm of the "T" tends to be more bilingual).

Ethnolinguistic segregation of groups in distinct areas has a direct impact on school segregation. While the Charte de la langue française resulted in more immigrant children and children from immigrant backgrounds attending French-language schools – 61.7 per cent of allophone pupils were enroled in French-language schools in 1987-88, compared with only 20.5 per cent in 1976-77 [Paillé 1989] – one of the consequences of residential and religious segregation in the education system has been an overconcentration of immigrant children in certain schools, particularly in the Francophone sector of the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal.

Religious affiliation has always played an important role in the social and spatial organization of Montreal's population. For example, the Catholic Church instituted English-language parishes for Irish immigrants in the first half of this century, more concerned with preserving their Catholic faith than with seeing them linguistically integrated into the French-speaking mainstream [Harvey 1987]. As well, despite the partial separation of church and state during the 1960s, Bill 107, which came into force in 1989, strengthened the religious content of school curricula. This legislation will likely encourage the movement of immigrants of various origins towards the Protestant schools where there is less emphasis on religious integration, thus reducing opportunity for contact and social integration with the Francophone majority.

The end result of these factors is to perpetuate traditional ethnolinguistic patterns of social inequality in Montreal. This reinforces friction that, while originating mainly from unequal treatment of communities, is manifested and expressed in terms of differences. Difference thus becomes to be seen as a *source* of friction, rather than as a *mechanism* of exclusion and inclusion.

Immigration Issues and Challenges

While immigrants to Quebec have always had to deal with the confrontation between Anglophones and Francophones, since residential and socio-occupational territories are inevitably on one side or the other of the omnipresent ethnolinguistic boundary, the main concern of non-immigrant Francophones has been to push this boundary outward, to expand the space within which it is possible to live and work in French. Most of the research

carried out on the shifting boundaries between ethnolinguistic groups has focused on what is happening to the boundary between the two majority groups. Vaillancourt's focus, for instance, was on the increasing marketability of French-speaking workers' language profiles on the Montreal job market [Vaillancourt 1988]. Although he found a widening gap between allophones and Francophones, this gap was not the main objective of his research.

In the Gendron Commission's report and in its various follow-up studies, including those by Vaillancourt and Monnier, immigrants with neither French nor English as a first language were marginalized. This group was classified as "other" or "allophone," catch-all concepts that serve to reinforce the marginal position of these groups while dismissing their diversity. The "others" category was considered important only to the extent that its actions helped strengthen or shift the boundary between the two majority groups. This was the case of the Italian community during the Saint-Léonard crisis in 1968, for instance, when the school board decided to convert bilingual classes to unilingual French [Harvey 1987].

Guindon's explanation for Francophones' lack of interest in "new Quebecers" is that the two groups were not directly competing on the job market during the 1960s and 1970s. Anglophone exclusivity pushed Francophones to stake out their own protected territories. It was only following the recession and cutbacks of the late 1970s that Francophones found themselves increasingly in direct competition with the immigrant population [Guindon 1988]. Fernand Harvey also refers to the belated awakening of Quebec's French-speaking population and its institutions to the importance of the immigration issue. This awakening essentially began around 1960. In 1965, for example, René Lévesque singled out four priority areas: setting up counselling services and a labour-market placement service; integration of schools; and a selective recruitment policy. It was not until 1975, however, that immigration became a top priority for the Quebec government, and it was not until 1978 that the provincial government was given right of review over immigrant selection under the Couture-Cullen agreement [Harvey 1987]. Growing awareness of the immigration issue was connected not only with the rapid urbanization of the French-speaking population, but also to its gradual transition from minority status to equal and, in some cases, majority status in terms of socioeconomic power (relative to Anglophone interests). The same awakening began vis-à-vis the Native population in northern Quebec around 1960; in this case, growing interest was triggered by plans to exploit the vast natural-resource base of that territory [Rouland 1978].

The new relation between French-speaking and new Quebecers that emerged in the late 1970s was different from the relations of conflict that had earlier existed between, for example, Francophone workers and Italian immigrants in the early part of this century. This time, the Quebec Francophone community,

with its growing power, addressed the immigrant population with a specific purpose in mind: to encourage it to respect certain rules it had laid down as the majority. A number of factors made it difficult for the immigrant population to wholeheartedly join this collective project to construct a Francophone society: conflicting language policies were emanating from the federal and provincial governments; English seemed to have lost none of its attractiveness on the labour market, despite the increased marketability of French in certain market sectors (due mostly to the development of the public service); the birth rate of the French-speaking population was on the decline; high unemployment had persisted from 1980-90; there was a hiring crisis in the public service; and the precarious state of several sectors of the job market had created a climate conducive to protectionism, which was flourishing along the existing ethnolinguistic and sexual boundaries separating the various types of workers and professionals.

During the 1980s, these dividing lines hardened. Increasing media interest in the "problem" of immigration began to supplant the older preoccupation with relations between Anglophones and Francophones. Analyses became stridently alarmist about the future of French-speaking Canada in light of the declining birth rate and immigration trends. It was feared that French-speaking Quebec culture might disappear. And this concern was heightened by new immigration from non-European countries. There was talk of "non-adaptable" immigrants. Immigrants were held responsible for the uncertainty reigning over the future of the French language, all the more because mother-tongue French children found themselves in a minority position in some schools in the Montreal region. Even more disquieting was the unwarranted link made by the media and the police forces between ethnic affiliation and criminal behaviour with reference to young people belonging to visible minorities, as has been done countless times in other countries and in the past to subordinate populations [Hall et al. 1978; Gilroy 1982]. There appeared to be a growing polarization and hardening of ethnic and ethnolinguistic boundaries in Quebec. A number of studies and analyses, situations, incidents, and comments from politicians, journalists and other parties reflected and reinforced the process of polarization.

An analysis published in 1989 by demographer Michel Paillé is a good example of how the current situation has been overdramatized. Using a single region of the greater Montreal area – the Island of Montreal – and defining as Francophone only those who listed French as their mother tongue, Paillé produced pessimistic projections about the future of the Francophone culture in Montreal. Concerning the demographic representation of Francophones on the Island, his best-case scenario was maintenance of the status quo (Francophones accounting for 60 per cent of the population in 1986). According to Paillé, however, it was more likely that the proportion of Francophones would decline, given that the birth rate of the Francophone population is not

expected to rise and that governments intend to increase the number of immigrants. It was in this context that Paillé posited that immigrants posed a threat to the future of the French-speaking community: if the downward trend were to continue, the non-Francophone immigrants arriving at the Island of Montreal would outnumber births in French-speaking households two to one. He also concluded that the Island's French-language school-children would soon be in a minority position in the public school system.

Paillé's alarmist tone is all too typical of the current debate over immigration issues in Quebec. While the facts are not exactly misrepresented, his method of assessing the immigrant presence in Montreal is questionable. The Island of Montreal is certainly a separate entity, geographically speaking, but it is not distinct, socially speaking, from the suburbs to the south and north. The demographic analysis should have at least taken into account the significant migration of Francophones to these suburbs. The concentration of immigrants on the Island (75 per cent choosing to settle there in 1986, according to Paillé) merely reflects their bipolar labour-market distribution. The Island encompasses areas with both the highest and lowest average incomes, the first group mainly English-speaking [see Loslier 1984]. The dynamics of relations between the various population categories cannot be grasped on the basis on their residential distribution unless the analytical framework is regional and based on socioeconomic status. If the decline in the demographic weight of Francophones on the Island is partly due to their upward mobility, then Paillé's pessimistic conclusions are somewhat unwarranted. What is worrisome most is not the future of Montreal's Francophone culture, but rather the widening socioeconomic gap between the Francophone and immigrant populations. This gap is even more evident in the school system. Berthelot notes that 31 per cent of Francophone school children on the Island of Montreal are now placed in private schools [Berthelot 1990].

Paillé's decision to look at only one part of Montreal, to ignore socioeconomic dynamics in the form of population shifts, and above all to base his projections regarding the survival of Francophone culture on a restrictive mother-tongue definition (thus excluding all those who might become Francophone or who work in French and ignoring Francophones who become Anglophones), allowed him to assign the lion's share of the blame for the French language's current difficulties on French-speaking women who decline to have children and on immigrants who refuse to become French-speaking.

Ironically, this kind of analysis can have the effect of reinforcing the barriers of exclusion and inclusion between the various communities at the same time as the author expresses regret that more immigrants are not joining the French-language community. The same contradiction may be found in Lise Payette's television program *Disparaître*, which prompted enormous controversy when it was aired on Radio-Canada in early 1989. Here again, women

and immigrants are singled out for blame. On the basis of selective interviews with, among others, a representative of the Front national français and a handful of "dyed-in-the-wool" British parents who chose to pull their children out of school when they fell into a minority situation relative to children of Asiatic origin, Payette drew a picture of an invading horde of immigrants who have already seized control of certain sections of Marseille and Montreal. Once again the challenge is seen as survival as a community, but this time the enemy is the double threat of the declining birth rate and the growing occupation of Montreal by "foreigners."

The analyses of Paillé and Payette can only increase the worsening and spreading tension between "native-born" Quebecers and immigrants. Caught between a rock and a hard place – Anglophone domination and increasing immigration – Francophones have always been driven by the need to win control of the various residential and socio-occupational areas. Because one of the effects of immigration is to reinforce the pattern of English dominance in high-level research and administration and allophone concentration at the bottom of the socio-occupational scale, Francophones feel compelled to step up the battle on both fronts: upward and downward.

Upward, there is a paradox between the desire to expand the areas where French is dominant and a feeling of impotence in the face of the rapid spread of English as an international language. Downward, there is another paradox. Excluded by Anglophones, Francophones have had to respond by erecting their own boundaries in order to ensure a degree of upward mobility or, at the least, a social space within which upward mobility in French is at least possible. If the entry requirement for this space is the ability to work in French, then greater francization by immigrants means more competition. This explains some of the ambiguity that characterizes current attitudes towards immigration. The same inclusion-exclusion structure that marked Anglophone-Francophone relations tends to be duplicated for immigrants. Research and analysis that helps reinforce this paradoxical attitude is done against a background of exclusionary practices. In Montreal, exclusion means exclusion in housing, jobs, and in school, as well as in public: in the street, parks and metro stations.

Apartments are not rented to blacks willingly [CDP 1988] nor, it might be noted, to welfare recipients. A large proportion of the complaints made to the Human Rights Commission fall into the latter category [Côté and Lemonde 1988]. Moreover, the "rent-geared-to-income" level (i.e., the percentage of income spent on housing) of Montreal's French-speaking West Indian population was by far the highest of all groups in 1986. For the purposes of this paper, we calculated the proportion of households in this population spending 50 per cent or more of their income on housing and found that it was almost twice as high as the Montreal average (index of 1.77 compared with

1.00 for the city as a whole). Other categories of immigrants are condemned to spend a high percentage of their incomes on housing, particularly those hailing from Africa, Latin America, and certain regions of Asia. In the case of blacks, not only does systematic exclusion limit their choices and force them to take more-expensive housing, but landowners tend to charge them higher rents [CDP 1988], while their low incomes mean a higher percentage is spent on housing.

This process of exclusion in the housing market is mirrored by the overconcentration of immigrant workers in certain sectors of the labour market [see Audet 1988]. The mere fact that these overconcentrations exist indicates how effectively present barriers operate. Not only were 28.6 per cent of women belonging to visible minorities working in unqualified manual jobs in 1981 versus 12.4 per cent of women outside these minorities [Chicha-Pontbriand 1989], but, as Teal has conclusively shown, relations of exclusion and inclusion can arise *within* this category of employees along ethnic, ethnolinguistic, and (of course) sexual lines [Teal 1985]. From his participant observation of the clothing industry, he showed how a dominant ethnolinguistic community at the firm level succeeded in constructing a network of favouritism and privilege that generated tension between that group and the other ethnolinguistic communities represented at the factory. The basic value of Teal's study is that it demonstrates how social tension can take root in a local firm through a structured system of inequalities. These structures are established through communalization, and they follow the criteria of language affiliation that cuts across the entire Montreal job market.

One consequence of the exclusion of minority women is a sense of profound isolation. A study by Labelle et al. and another carried out by the Association des femmes salvadoriennes document this linguistic, cultural and social isolation [Labelle et al. 1987; Association des femmes salvadoriennes et centro-américaines 1987]. A study by Lock and Dunk also indicates that a large proportion of these women internalize the stress they encounter in their social and professional lives. Immigrant women of Greek origin in Montreal have a high incidence of burnout-related mental health problems as a result of double work loads and their sense of isolation [Lock and Dunk 1987].

While the stress experienced by female immigrants is little evident in public because of, among other things, its attendant isolation, social friction in the relations between young people who are immigrants or from immigrant families and society at large looms large in the media-projected image presented by society. While certain categories of immigrants are more likely to be affected by high unemployment rates – adults from Cambodia, Haiti, Vietnam and Latin America for example (1981 data from [Audet 1987]) – it is primarily the young people in these groups who are most severely affected by unemployment. In 1986, the unemployment rates for young immigrants

(or immigrants' children) under 24 years of age on the Montreal labour market were 60, 44.2 and 29.1 per cent for Jamaicans, Haitians, and Vietnamese respectively [Chicha-Pontbriand 1990]. Unemployment rates like these, coupled with the overconcentration of visible-minority youth in precarious jobs with no hope of advancement, have a direct impact on the relationship of these young people with society at large.

These young people suffer exclusion in one form or another from the day they start school. Most of them attending "welcoming" classes, for example, find themselves classed with younger children once they re-enter regular classes, 20 per cent of these children being more than three years behind by the time this occurs [Berthelot 1990]. The children with the highest failure rates in the French-language school system are those whose mother tongues are Creole, Spanish or Chinese. Aside from the children's cultural and linguistic differences, teachers seem generally unprepared and ill-equipped to deal with this new student-body profile [Paradis 1987]. According to Paradis, teachers complain, among other things, about how difficult it is to handle Haitian children. Students of Haitian origin we interviewed for the purposes of this paper put the blame for this state of affairs on the shoulders of the teachers who, in their view, are negatively disposed towards them. Research cited by Berthelot appears to bear them out; one study in France found that only 20 per cent of immigrant children encountered positive attitudes on the part of their teachers, versus 25 per cent of children of blue-collar workers, and 50 per cent of children of white-collar workers [Berthelot 1990, 135]. Once again we can see the complex relationship between socioeconomic status and categorization, and in the long run teachers' negative attitudes towards children of certain minorities help to reinforce their social exclusion and inferior socioeconomic status, since they are reflected in poorer grades.

It may be argued that the negative attitudes and tendentious comments mentioned by young people, as well as their difficulty in making friends outside their own group, testify to the existence in school of barriers that will confront them in their adult life. This is what Miles [1982; 1989] calls the process of *racialization*. Problematic relations at school are exacerbated by the controversy surrounding the use of languages other than French in Montreal's French-language public schools. While the Charte de la langue française succeeded in enroling 82 per cent of foreign-born students in French-language schools by 1987-88 (compared with 61.6 per cent in 1981-82 [Paillé 1989]), it has not necessarily succeeded in francizing their activities outside the classroom. The difficulty of controlling language behaviour led the Catholic school board and school principals to stake out radical and rather unrealistic positions on the language issue. Based as they are on the linguistic insecurity of Francophones in the face of threats to the future of their language, these positions may lead to an increase in the latent tensions between the immigrant and non-immigrant populations.

Conflict at school, however, does not have the media impact of confrontation between visible-minority youth and the police. Gilroy showed how from the 1960s onward the British black population tended to be portrayed as prone to criminal activities [Gilroy 1982]. Initially focused on single acts of violence (e.g., muggings), the negative image perpetuated by the media and police forces broadened in the 1970s (e.g., gangs) to eventually include the entire black community, who were felt to be "culturally" predisposed to criminal behaviour. Being black in New York, Catholic in Belfast, or Italian in Montreal in the early part of this century is enough to assign you to what the 19th-century British called the "criminal classes." Young blacks in Montreal are no exception. The exclusion they face on the labour market, at school and in housing mirrors the treatment they receive in public. The commission of inquiry into the relations between the police and visible ethnic minority youth, which was set up following the death of Anthony Griffin in November 1987, found a wide range of problems in minority/police relations [CDP 1988].

First, there is what might be termed a vicious circle that arises from an overconcentration of police resources. Having decided to fight the real or perceived delinquency of some young blacks, the police concentrate their resources in certain areas of the city. This focusing of attention indeed yields higher arrest rates relative to other groups. High arrest rates prompt an increase in police resources, and the same vicious circle of conflict between the police and young blacks emerges as has marked the last 20 years of British history. Efforts to label this group as "criminal" in nature or culture have been all the more successful because, having targeted its resources on visible-minority youth, police in the greater Montreal area classify their suspects as "white" or "non-white" in their publicly released statistics [op. cit.]. The media are quick to seize on any fact related to black "criminality" for public consumption, thereby reinforcing the image of a group of the population that is dangerous and aggressive. The commission of inquiry also pointed out that, according to the Civil Liberties Union, when there is a conflict between a white and a black, the police will tend to take the side of the white, even if it was the black who originally called them in. Police are also more likely to hold a black without good cause than a white, to object to their release on bail, and to refer them to the Youth Court. Young people belonging to other minorities (e.g., Latin Americans and Vietnamese) are treated much the same way, but the greatest friction is between white, generally Francophone police officers and young Anglophone blacks. The usual setting for this confrontation is public areas: parks, main streets, shopping centres and public transport. From their multiculturalist point of view, members of the Commission suggest that police should be more sensitive to the "cultural" need of young West Indians to gather and interact in the street [op. cit.]. However, one wonders whether this need is related more to the high unemployment rates of this group than to imported cultural traditions.

Taken together, these factors – linguistic insecurity on the part of the Francophone majority, maintenance and even reinforcement of ethnic, ethnolinguistic and sexual barriers in the labour market, the image of criminality ascribed to young people belonging to certain minorities – have created a tense social situation in the Montreal region. While the roots of this tension are multidimensional, it can be argued that the ethnic and ethnolinguistic structure of the labour market, particularly in light of the large numbers of precarious jobs and the high rate of unemployment, coupled with the linguistic insecurity of the French-speaking majority, play a central role in the continuing state of tension.

State Management of Ethnic and Ethnolinguistic Relations

Faced with this situation, government action may take a number of forms. Quebec strives to promote workplace francization and the integration of immigrants into the French-language community. Both the federal and provincial levels of government also endeavour to apply the principles of the Canadian and Quebec charters of rights through employment equity programs and in the provision of public services. They tolerate or actively encourage ethnic community organizations to take over the task of providing various cultural and social services (e.g., literacy, counselling, food aid) that they are not in a position to address. Such services may be funded through grants – from, among other sources, Employment and Immigration Canada at the federal level, the Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration at the provincial level, and various charitable organizations – or may be indirectly funded through the placement of trainees under federal and provincial employability enhancement programs and measures. Both levels of government also attempt to select immigrants in accordance with the needs of the job market. At the same time, governments also promote dialogue on multiculturalism and interculturalism, being obliged to reconcile the aspirations of non-immigrants (including Anglophones, Francophones, other language groups, and Native peoples) and those of immigrants hailing from a wide variety of origins.

This paper will focus on three critical areas of government intervention, where the government aims 1) to raise the status of the French language and thereby alleviate the Francophone majority's feeling of linguistic insecurity; 2) to alter the boundaries of exclusion and inclusion that cut across the labour market; and 3) to support and (partially) fund the efforts of ethnic community organizations to provide basic services to their respective communities.

The language barrier in Quebec, which cuts across residential and socio-occupational boundaries, remains a key factor in inter-community relations. As we have seen, the fact that it has been difficult for a large proportion of

the French-speaking work force to work in French has heavily coloured the relationships of this group with other segments of the immigrant and non-immigrant population. Since the early 1970s, the provincial government has made the use of French in the workplace one of its top priorities. Despite the adoption of the Charte de la langue française in the late 1970s and the issuing of numerous francization certificates to companies during the 1980s, the boundary line between the two language communities in the workplace shifts only very slowly, and not always in a direction favourable to French.

For example, Béland found that only 56 per cent of the labour force was working mainly in French (more than 90 per cent of the time) in the greater Montreal area in 1989, compared with 51 per cent in 1979 [Béland 1991, 15 and 51]. The results of this survey confirm not only the importance of the provincial public sector as a bastion of French-language use, where 73 per cent of the work force was working mainly in French, but also the persistent under-use of French in the private sector. Béland refers to the perverse effect stemming from the professionalization of Francophone workers in this sector, where the percentage of Francophone professional and technicians working mainly in French fell from 51 to 49 per cent and from 55 to 51 per cent respectively between 1979-89 [op. cit., 58]. Professionalization brings these categories of workers in closer contact with the traditional English-speaking universe, since technical documentation tends to be English-only. The only increase in the use of French that the author considers statistically significant was among employees in the service sector; the proportion of these workers working mainly in French rose from 53 to 62 per cent between 1979-89 [op. cit.]. Béland sees this as a reflection of the increasing purchasing power of French-speaking consumers of services.

The most striking finding of the Béland survey is the stability of this territorial boundary in the private sector, where English predominates wherever the use of language is important and French wherever manual labour is the norm (i.e., where language use is minimal or non-existent and where written documentation is less important). For instance, 66 per cent of blue-collar workers in the Montreal private sector generally worked in French in 1989, compared with 46 per cent of workers engaged in white-collar work and 42 per cent engaged in public relations work [op. cit., 17].

The relative stability of the language boundary in the private sector – which follows for the most part the boundary between blue-collar and white-collar work, production and management, and thus jobs where language is little used and jobs where it is paramount – indicates how difficult it is for the state to implement the desire of the French-speaking majority to expand the space within which it is possible to work in French. The problem is not simply the perverse effect of professionalization, but also the fact that an exclusion boundary remains in place in a key sector of the economy. Neither is the problem

necessarily the exclusion practices of the English-speaking community (community defined according to the traditional criterion of mother tongue), since this community in any event is shrinking, but rather the territorial domination of the English language as manifested through the language-related behaviour of the members of a *professional* language community, whereby a premium is placed on the use of English regardless of one's origin or mother tongue.

It might even be argued that survival of this linguistic boundary in the workplace owes as much to sociolinguistic patterns in the division of work within companies as to the influence of external markets. In any event, the difficulty experienced by the Quebec government in trying to shift this boundary testifies to the very real limits on its capacity to intervene in the private sector as opposed to the public sector. The only possible conclusion is that the French-speaking majority is unable to impose its majority will in the private-sector workplace. It is interesting to note that the situation in French-speaking Switzerland is quite different. On the subject of immigrants' use of their mother tongues in the workplace, Lüdi notes that the use of foreign languages is forbidden at work by internal company rules [Lüdi 1990]. In other words, the French-language community in the Francophone regions of Switzerland is able to impose its will in the workplace without legislation to this effect [Tremblay 1991].

Thus in this critical area of government management of ethnic and ethnolinguistic relations – the implementation of Quebec's language policy in the workplace – we find a government that is relatively powerless. If we relate government actions in this area to Weber's theory of government [Weber 1985], it is clear that the Quebec government's claim that, as the elected instrument of the people, it alone is empowered to impose their collective will on the territory it supposedly controls (aside from areas of federal jurisdiction) is mitigated by the existence of a number of private territories that remain subject to other wills.

This relative incapacity to strengthen the use of the French language in key sectors of the economy and in the upper echelons of the private sector has a direct impact on the government's ability to encourage the immigrant population to learn and use French. This explains the limited success of the French classes offered by the Centres de formation et d'orientation des immigrants (COFI), which were funded until the winter of 1991 under the National Institutional Training Program (NITP) set up by the federal department of Employment and Immigration but administered by the provincial government. In 1989-90, an estimated 6,478 permanent residents attended French classes, 4,678 of them full-time and 1,800 part-time [Quebec 1990, 52]. The potential clientele, however, was estimated at 16,863, meaning that the "rate of language training access" was 38.4 per cent [loc. cit.]. With the transfer to Quebec of responsibility for counselling services and linguistic and cultural

integration under the 1991 *Canada/Quebec Agreement* [Canada 1991*a*], the Quebec government now has complete responsibility for immigrants' language training. In April 1991, the Quebec government announced its intention to double the number of spaces in its training centres (COFI) in order to accommodate 3,000 additional students in 1991-92; the monies allotted to francization were increased from $23 million in 1990-91 to $43 million in 1991-92 [*Le Devoir* April 4 1991]. The effectiveness of this language training is another question, not only because the rate of language training access remains relatively low, but also because there is no indication that the *demand* for a certain level of language ability on the job market will increase automatically simply because better language skills are offered. That is why more information is needed on actual language use in the workplace [McAll 1990*c*].

The complexity of the language question also surfaces in the current debate over increasing the number of Francophone immigrants as proposed in Quebec's immigration policy statement [Quebec 1990]. Despite the apparent merits of such a move, considering the low birth rate and the French language's unfavourable balance of power, it is by no means clear that larger Francophone immigration *in itself* would be the panacea some suggest. If increased immigration is confined to the traditional bipolar channels, there is no guarantee that highly qualified French-speaking immigrants will not fall prey to the same forces of bilingualization and anglicization in their workplace language behaviours as have Francophone Quebecers. Encouraging Francophone immigration to fill low-level jobs may also have the perverse effect of reinforcing the trend towards linguistic stratification, whereby the French language is less and less associated with socioeconomic success.

The future of the balance of linguistic power is played out within society, and immigrants do no more than adjust to this changing but pre-determined reality, as suggested in the 1971 Report of the Gendron Commission [Quebec 1972]. This does not mean that Francophone immigration will not strengthen the position of the French language, nor that immigrants who are, or who become, English-speaking have not tended to reinforce the dominance of the English language. This is particularly true of business investors – a category of immigrants that accounts for 22 per cent of the recent movement [Quebec 1990, 31] – for whom knowledge of French counts far less as a selection criteria than access to capital. In this case, we can assume that their language profiles strongly influence the languages actually used at the management levels of the firms in which they invest. However, and contrary to commonly expressed opinion (such as in Paillé's study [1989] and Lise Payette's documentary *Disparaître*), immigrants are not primarily responsible for the current language situation.

The second critical aspect of government intervention is the boundaries of exclusion and inclusion that traverse the labour market. We will first look at

some of the attempts that have been made to dismantle these barriers. The federal and provincial levels of government are now pressing for the institution of employment equity and equal opportunity programs for women, visible minorities, Natives, and the disabled. At the federal level, this initiative dates back to 1986 and the adoption of the Employment Equity Act and Federal Contractors Program. Any employer with at least 100 employees falling within the purview of the federal government, including crown corporations, is bound to respect the principle of employment equity [Canada 1986]. The same obligation applies to medium-sized corporations wishing to bid on federal goods and services contracts worth $200,000 and up [op. cit.]. In Quebec, the provisions of Part III of the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms dealing with employment equity programs came into force in 1985 [Bosset and Caron 1987]. The 1986 regulation singled out four target groups among those mentioned in Section 10 of the Charter: women, members of cultural communities, the disabled, and Natives [Chicha-Pontbriand 1989]. An employer would be required to establish such a program following a discrimination complaint, or the employer could set it up voluntarily. In either case, Quebec's Commission des droits de la personne is responsible for ensuring that the program complies with the law. For Quebec public departments and organizations, Treasury Board has the responsibility for implementing such programs, with the Commission des droits acting in an advisory capacity [Bossett and Caron 1987]. In Quebec, companies with 100 employees and more but with provincial government contracts of $100,000 and over are also obliged to establish employment equal access programs [Loiselle 1987].

Thus the two levels of government are directly tackling systemic discrimination on the labour market. These programs represent an admission by government that discrimination affects individuals as members of *communities*, since initiatives based on individual cases have had little success [Vogel-Polsky 1985; Côté and Lemonde 1988]. At the same time, the implementation of such programs has left something to be desired. Back in 1987, the Commission des droits de la personne noted the extreme slowness with which these programs were being introduced into the Quebec public service [Commission des droits de la personne 1987]. The difficulties involved in raising the proportion of allophones and visible minorities in the Quebec public service is also alluded to in the immigration policy statement. In 1990, members of visible minorities accounted for only 1.7 per cent of employees – well short of the government's target of 9 per cent [Quebec 1990]. The impact of the federal employment equity legislation is equally unclear. In the first two years of its application (1987 and 1988), there was some improvement in the recruitment and promotion of women and members of visible minorities (among the 373 and 372 employers who filed reports for these two years, respectively), but it was concluded that these changes had simply confirmed the existing occupational distribution among the various categories [Canada 1990*a*, 7-8].

These various programs are modelled after U.S. initiatives of the later 1960s [McAll 1990*b*]. In the United States, affirmative action programs were largely abandoned in the early 1980s under the Reagan administration [Omi and Winant 1989; Lesemann 1988]. Looking back, these programs had little impact on the occupational segregation of women [Albelda 1986] or women's average incomes relative to men [David 1987]. As for the black or Afro-American population, it is unclear whether affirmative action per se helped diminish occupational segregation between blacks and whites, or whether it was the white population's exodus from certain urban centres and their public services [Waldinger 1988]. The arrival of significant numbers of Mexican immigrants in the south-west states also created new employment opportunities for the black population in the public service, leading to a degree of upward mobility that had little connection with affirmative action programs [Muller and Espenshade 1985]. The fact that many blacks have given up hope of ever finding a job and so are no longer considered part of the labour force has also contributed to the declining rate of occupational segregation between blacks and whites [David 1987].

The failure of anti-discrimination legislation (as shown by Côté and Lemonde for Quebec and Vogel-Polsky for Europe) and the setbacks experienced by affirmative action programs in the United States suggest that, here again, governments that try to establish equal access or employment equity programs can find themselves opposed by the collective interests of those who benefit from practices of inclusion and exclusion. The situation in Quebec is particularly delicate because federal and provincial programs do not take into account anti-Francophone discrimination on the labour market. Yet, after discrimination on the basis of sex, this is by far the most common form of discrimination in the Montreal region, both historically and currently. That is why the establishment of equal access programs at all levels of the public service (as proposed in the Énoncé politique), while it would certainly encourage the integration of immigrant and minority workers into the only segment of the labour market truly dominated by French, would have the perverse effect of reducing the opportunities for non-immigrant Francophones to aspire to French-language jobs.

As governments try, with varying degrees of success, to dismantle the boundaries of exclusion and inclusion that traverse the labour market, they tend to re-establish the same boundaries through their programs to enhance work force employability. For instance, Savage determined from a sample of 501 individuals completing on-the-job training sessions in Montreal between 1984-86 that the sector in which the session took place largely determined the success rate [Savage 1989]. The chances of securing employment upon completion of the training session were highest in the manufacturing sector. The majority of female trainees, however, were placed in other sectors – accommodation and food services, for example – where women are already

well represented and where the chances of finding a permanent position at the end of the training session were lower, given the difficult conditions prevailing in these sectors.

There is thus a risk that programs designed to improve the employability of various minority groups will end up with the same results as those recorded after the first few years of operation of the federal Employment Equity Program: i.e., a reinforcement of the existing occupational distribution structure [Canada 1990*a*, 7-8]. The results of the Canadian Jobs Strategy (CJS) set up in 1985 at the federal level by Employment and Immigration Canada, illustrate how difficult it is to alter the existing structure of the labour market. All of the programs established under the CJS – with the exception of Innovations – were aimed at improving the labour market status of women, Natives, the disabled and visible minorities, among their other goals [Canada 1991*b*]. However, Daenzer [1990] concluded that several of the programs yielded discriminatory results. Participation in the Job Development program, for instance, was restricted to those unemployed but available for work for 24 of the last 30 weeks [Canada 1990*b*, 12]. Daenzer argues that the effect of this requirement was to exclude a sizeable group of workers in precarious positions, mainly immigrants, who did not have the resources to remain unemployed for 24 weeks. Two other programs – Skills Investment and Skills Shortages – were aimed at those with significant ties to the labour market and, in the second case, those whose skills were in danger of becoming outmoded. The beneficiaries of these programs were primarily non-minority males – 67 per cent of participants in the Skills Shortages program in 1987-88 [Daenzer 1990, 81]. The tendency to simply consolidate the current distribution of the labour force is also evident from the fact that two thirds of the women participating in the Job Entry program in its first year of operation were working in relatively poorly paid, female-dominated sectors [op. cit., 78].

The U.S. experience in employability enhancement seems to mirror the Canadian and Quebec experience. On the basis of a sample of 3,420 participants in programs relating to the U.S. Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) in 1976, Harlan and Hackett [1985] concluded that white males were the most frequent beneficiaries of all these programs, particularly the on-the-job training programs, where they represented 63.5 per cent of participants. This latter program was the one most directly oriented towards possible employment at the end of the training session. While 35.4 per cent of white males in the sample were enroled in this program, the percentages for all other categories were smaller: 20.3 per cent (white females), 15.9 per cent (black females), and 12.5 per cent (black males) [op. cit., 246]. Harlan and Hackett concluded that the majority group was the main beneficiary of these programs because of the influence of a range of factors, for the most part unquantifiable. Among these factors, they suspected that the existing

occupational segregation of the labour market and employers' discriminatory practices played significant roles, as well as factors related to the choices and strategies selected by individuals and households in a context of poverty and unemployment in order to deal with the wide array of available programs and policies.

The various programs targeting skills development and employability (equal opportunity programs) thus do not necessarily have any more of an impact on the sexual, ethnic and ethnolinguistic structuring of inequalities on the labour market than programs that aim to change discriminatory hiring and promotion practices (equal access programs). They may even have the perverse effect of reinforcing the existing structure. This means that the government itself may be partially responsible for the labour market exclusion of young people belonging to various ethnic minorities. Wrench, for example, demonstrated that government officials in Great Britain influenced the occupational orientation of young blacks, steering them away from sectors of the labour market where they might encounter discrimination. With the best of intentions, therefore, these officials were in fact reinforcing existing occupational segregation patterns.

Government officials may thus be helping to build and maintain a "racialized" order [Omi and Winant 1989] or a process of "racialization" [Miles 1982; 1989] even as they try to tear down that order. Omi and Winant's "racialized" order involves the same practices of excluding people of non-European origin through internal social boundaries that were associated with the external boundaries maintained in the United States and Canada from the 1920s to the 1960s. The fact that governments themselves may help maintain internal sexist, ethnic-national or racist orders while trying to dismantle them is not contradictory, since governments are actually *achieving* the first objective and *failing* to achieve the second. The reason is not the government's inability (or ability, for that matter) to influence the labour market, but rather that the government institutions are themselves structured according to the same practices of exclusion and inclusion, with the result that intervention merely reproduces the same structure.

The third critical area of intervention is support and (to a certain point) funding for ethnic community organizations in their efforts to supply basic services to their communities. For the Montreal Haitian community alone, there was one community-type organization for each 750 people in 1989. According to their particular objectives, size, and resources, the community organizations serving this population – which is among the poorest in the Montreal area – attempt to meet their clients' needs in terms of counselling, food, legal aid, housing, and social services of all kinds, all needs connected with their precarious socioeconomic status. In some cases, these services are not supplied by government agencies (food aid, for example); in other cases,

community-based efforts reflect the desire of residents to take charge of their own community. The services offered by these organizations may also be the result of a transfer of responsibilities officially belonging to the government. At the provincial level, for example, training in job search techniques is offered through the Services externes de main-d'oeuvre under the Income Security Act (Loi sur la sécurité du revenu). Counselling of new immigrants to Quebec is also largely looked after by community organizations. Until the transfer of responsibilities from the federal to the provincial governments in April 1991, organizations active in this area were eligible for funding from Employment and Immigration Canada to help their immigrant constituency with the task of becoming established and adapting to Canadian society [Canada 1991*a*].

A distinction should be made between organizations working on the front lines and organizations with an essentially cultural focus. This distinction is clear in the policy for financing these groups followed by the Ministry of Cultural Services and Immigration. Substantial sums were allocated by this ministry for the teaching of heritage languages other than English and French. Between 1985-89, the main beneficiary of this program was Montreal's Italian community, which is the largest ethnolinguistic group apart from Anglophones and Francophones. This financial support indicates the Quebec government's political will to promote the continued use of languages and cultures other than French. This assistance program and other aid for heritage cultures presumably have a beneficial effect on young people's attachment to both their home culture and their host society, and so may open the door to more positive attitudes towards school, for example [Berthelot 1990]. However, unlike many of the projects taken over by community organizations, this type of project is not related to the satisfaction of immediate needs.

Over the years, the financial assistance provided by the Ministry for programs concerned mainly with immediate needs has increased. This change in priorities is reflected in the amount of money allocated under the counselling and adjustment assistance programs and that provided for community work. The same shift may be seen in federal multiculturalism policy, which has gradually moved from a preoccupation with preserving culture to a greater emphasis on combatting discrimination and racism.

Generally speaking, ethnic community organizations have to steer a course among the different sources of funding to finance their operations. One of the largest Haitian community organizations, for instance, received funds in 1988-89 from the Ministry of Education and the Montreal Catholic School Commission (course development and teachers' salaries), the Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration (25 per cent of the organization's total budget), the Secretary of State responsible for implementing federal multiculturalism policy (grants for teaching Creole and activities focusing on the status of women, accounting for 13 per cent of the organization's operating

budget), and particularly Employment and Immigration Canada, whose Challenge and Job Development programs funded more than 50 per cent of their activities. Some priority services – food aid, for instance – are provided by the organization without any direct funding. Because it is not registered as a charity, the organization receives no money from Centraide.

At the other end of the spectrum, one of the smallest Haitian community organizations focuses primarily on food assistance, Creole language training, and francization. This organization's operations are made possible in part by the local municipality's donation of a room free of charge. The organization's main activity is food aid. It receives no direct grants for this activity; some of the funding (20 per cent of the total 1988-89 budget) is provided by the beneficiaries themselves (through a charge of $6 a month). The organization received grants from the Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration amounting to 13.5 per cent of its annual budget, and multiculturalism grants from the Secretary of State amounting to 7.5 per cent of revenues. A substantial portion of funding was provided by the Montreal Catholic School Commission (for Creole language teaching and francization), while Employment and Immigration's Challenge and Job Development projects were much less important sources of funding than they were for the larger organization discussed above. The smaller organization – like most of those surveyed for this project, whether belonging to the Haitian, Latin American or African communities – depends for much of its operation on temporary workers supplied under the community work (Travaux communautaires) initiative, which was rebaptized job experience (Expérience de travail) following the adoption of the Income Security Act. Some religious communities have also been important sources of funding for various organizations.

It is interesting to note that the complex relationship between government agencies and ethnic community organizations in Montreal and Quebec City dates back to the early part of the 19th century [Fecteau 1989]. While the Catholic Church increasingly assumed responsibility for the social and health care needs of the French-speaking community, the various immigrant communities began to set up their own institutions. This marked the beginning of what Fecteau calls the "ethnicization" of services provided to the public, with the government supplying funding on an ad hoc basis. The government assumed responsibility in the 1960s and 1970s for a range of services to the public that had previously been looked after by the Church and certain ethnic and ethnolinguistic communities. The current situation in Montreal reflects this development, and a new relationship between government and community organizations is now taking shape.

It has been suggested that a kind of buffer zone be established around the state sector to enable ethnic community organizations to survive with a secure source of financing and adequately trained personnel and to offer services

culturally customized to their respective clients' needs [Bibeau 1987]. Other institutions (e.g., the City of Montreal) have indicated a clear desire to integrate and involve the various ethnic communities in existing structures. As the division of responsibilities is negotiated between government and communities, however, a varied multitude of organizations continues to flourish.

Far removed from the cultural pronouncements of politicians and from the political interest groups connected with the establishment and management of cultural policy at both the federal and provincial levels, there are a number of everyday problems, both individual and collective, to be dealt with. In the name of decentralization and democratization, "cultural" sensitivity, and government cost-cutting, these organizations and their constituencies have been largely left to their own devices. While it is all very well that "community works" projects and Employment and Immigration's Job Development project have allowed community organizations to hire non-voluntary staff, the jobs created by these measures are temporary and do not necessarily accomplish much in the way of on-the-job training or in furthering the social and linguistic integration of those hired into the Francophone community.

For community organizations, precariousness is a fact of life. Current funding levels, which are enough to allow some of these organizations to operate, are probably adequate as far as cultural programs are concerned. In terms of immediate needs, however, funding is insufficient and inappropriate. The inappropriateness of funding is most evident with respect to application of the provincial Income Security Act. If ethnic community organizations have managed to keep afloat, it is thanks in part to the community work and job experience programs, which have provided them with staff, who, while in precarious jobs, are at least paid – at rates slightly above welfare. In other words, organizations supplying front-line social services rely for their continued existence on legislation that has shifted its primary focus over the years from social assistance to job incentives. The target group of this legislation are individuals whose employability needs to be augmented through actual labour market experience and some kind of occupational training. Ethnic community organizations, therefore, are funded under legislation that was conceived for an entirely different purpose than providing front-line services. The replacement, from 1989 onwards, of the project Travaux communautaires by the project Expérience de travail, is a move that while it yields less in terms of income, makes perfect sense in the context of legislation intended to be more stringent and so more motivating, but the end result is to deprive ethnic community organizations of one of their sources of indirect funding.

Rather than an indication of healthy decentralization and democratization, this explosion of activity on the part of ethnic community organizations, relying largely on volunteers, reflects the poverty of the client groups and the fact that the government is having trouble providing the required services on

its own because of its fiscal constraints. The government's inability to ensure adequate services translates, in multicultural and intercultural discourse, into encouragement for the volunteers of ethnic community organizations to take charge of the services delivered to their own communities. This tendency to encourage what might be termed "self-management" of poverty and exclusion is the counterpart to the trend towards the privatization – at the top of the socioeconomic scale – of social and health care services that appeared in the 1980s in North America and Europe [Lesemann 1988].

As far as state management of ethnic and ethnolinguistic relations is concerned, the situation is as follows: 1) governments' view of the question is based on a restrictive definition of culture, which tends to obscure the multidimensional character of the issue's social aspects; 2) the government of Quebec is essentially incapable of imposing its francization agenda in a number of areas connected with key sectors of the private economy; 3) governments are apparently duplicating the existing structural inequality of the labour market – in terms of sex and ethnic or ethnolinguistic origin – even as they try to fight it; and 4) overburdened by their own fiscal crises, governments are attempting to pass on some of the responsibility for providing social and health care services to an underfinanced community sector (or to the private sector).

Conclusion

Two main conclusions may be drawn from this analysis of attitudes and policies developed in connection with contemporary Quebec and immigration. First, at the level of explanation, government institutions tend to restrict themselves to a limited conceptual space. Second, state management in such critical areas as the application of Quebec's language legislation, the structural ethnic, ethnolinguistic and sexual inequalities of the labour market, and the development and funding of ethnic community organizations reveals the state's general impotence as a result of its own fiscal crisis, and the contradictions inherent in some of its efforts to correct these inequalities. In this, the concluding section of the paper, I will address, first, the question of the capacity of the various governments to intervene and the influence of the context on policy development. Second, I will examine some of the conceptual and practical aspects of state management of ethnic relations in contemporary Quebec.

State management of ethnic relations does not seem to be the responsibility of the technocracy – seconded by healthy input from civil society in the form of social movements [Touraine 1969; Touraine et al. 1984] – nor the responsibility of the state as crisis manager, as theorized by Habermas [1975]. In the latter's view, the characteristic reaction of the state in "planned" economies to a crisis is avoidance measures. These are characterized by inadequate

coordination between government organizations and reliance on predetermined rules to decide whether intervention is warranted [op. cit.]. In extreme cases, state reaction becomes what Rocher described as "volcanology" [Rocher 1980], an approach that is the exact opposite of planned social management; this phenomenon was evident in the reaction to the 1990s "Native" crisis. The analysis presented in this paper – particularly concerning the application of Quebec's language legislation and the structural inequality of the labour market – suggests rather that state management is subject to what might be termed the *strong rationalities* of the various dominant communities working both inside and outside government institutions. This reflects the complex effect of various forms of communalization – in the Weberian sense of the term – including as wide a range of communalizations as those based on sexual "classes" [Juteau and Laurin 1980], on ethnic and ethnolinguistic affiliation, and on social classes.

Not only are the various "strong" rationalities the very basis of the problematic social relations targeted by state intervention and not only are they themselves entrenched in state institutions, but they also have a central influence over policy development and the use of the concepts underlying these policies. Despite the apparent neutrality of current debate based on restrictive definitions of culture (since multiculturalism and interculturalism make no judgments about "cultural" differences), these analytical frameworks are applied to a situation that is far from neutral. For example, starting from the premise that there is but *one* national culture, it is a short step to declare that certain categories of immigrants are unable to adjust to that culture and so should be rejected or returned whence they came. Arguments of this kind are frequently advanced to support calls to restrict or cut off particular channels of immigration, whether it be Europe or Canada.

The analysis on which these positions are based is founded not only on cultural differences, but also on the premise that there is a national community founded on a shared culture that is inviolable. Here an emphasis on cultural differences as the key element in social relations can easily lead to an attitude conducive to exclusion. The views of the British and French right stress the notion of cultural undesirability, which all too often becomes undesirability period. These positions sometimes appear to contravene economic interests. In the 1960s, some factions of the British Conservative Party were in favour of tightening controls over immigration from the former British colonies in spite of the advantages of cheap labour [Foot 1965]. They aimed to preserve the "white European" character of the British population, as did U.S. and Canadian immigration policy in force until the 1960s.

To better understand the meaning sometimes ascribed to the concept of cultural difference – as well as the concepts of "disadvantage" and "advantage" as they are applied to the non-economic impact of immigration – one

must grasp the diversity of interests at work within host societies. The racist, European-centred viewpoint promulgated by the British right in the 1960s tried to polarize public opinion around some of these differences while glossing over the affiliations that transcended these dividing lines and the diverse and fragmented character of the "European" and "non-European" blocks. Monoculturalist arguments aspire to the same objective by assuming the existence of a homogeneous cultural group; this means there are common interests to defend, and the immigration of "culturally" different groups can then be construed as advantageous or disadvantageous relative to that mainstream. In both cases a community is constructed ideologically according to its beliefs and internal homogeneity, whether on the basis of "race" (or "racialization," as Miles puts it [1982; 1989]) or "culture." When the raison-d'être of the community is defined in this way, it can be claimed that its survival depends on its ability to protect its "racial" or "cultural" purity.

Here the concept of cultural difference or "distance" [see Abou 1990] can act as a political catalyst for all those identifying with the newly constructed category. This indicates that existing ideologies must be dissected in order to gain a better understanding of their underlying interests [see Simon 1983]. This process requires that the analysis be placed in the proper temporal and spatial context, and that the social attitudes towards immigration that are causing problems be situated with respect to relations between the various interest groups that are already part of the host society. As in cases involving so-called fundamental rights, nothing may be taken for granted outside of the delicate balance between the existing communities and their particular interests.

State management of ethnic relations in the Quebec and Canadian context is characterized by such a desire to consolidate, at the level of identity the various forms of national communalization corresponding to the respective interests of the two governments. From the federal government's standpoint, this involves what the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism has called the "citizenship and national identity aspects of our nation-building", translated in the French version as "l'affirmation de notre identité nationale et de notre sentiment d'appartenance" [Canada 1989, 3]. Even though the concept of culture has generally been given a high profile in this process of constructing a national identity, the concept of "race" has also played an important role, particularly in the development of the immigration policy that remained in effect until the 1960s. More recently, the notion of "racial" differences has sneaked back into the official government line. For example, the Multiculturalism Act of 1988 states that "it is . . . the policy of the Government of Canada to recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and *racial* diversity of Canadian society" [Section 3(1)a), author's italics].

The formal recognition that there can be distinct "races" echoes the social theories of an earlier age. Although traces of these theories can still be detected

in the legal systems of certain countries – such as the prevalence of the "race relations" concept in Great Britain – modern sociology considers this concept to have no validity except in reference to the classification systems of racist ideologies. In other words, the idea that there are "distinct" races is the very basis of racism. It is disheartening to find this concept officially sanctioned in law, as it is to see the recent founding of an institute dedicated to the study of "race" relations. The new focus of multiculturalism policy should have been the problem of *racism*, not problems in relations between "races," an approach that simply reinforces the central theme of racism.

There are thus three main elements that underlie Quebec's immigrant-related social problems: the balance of power between two main language communities and the linguistic insecurity of the French-speaking population; the ethnic, ethnolinguistic and sexual structuring of inequality in the labour market; and the lack of support and development assistance for the ethnic community organizations faced with the task of providing priority services to their respective constituencies. These three elements are, of course, inter-related. Francophones' linguistic insecurity stems in large measure from linguistic exclusion and the related ethnolinguistic structuring of the labour market. The problems that the various ethnic community organizations are trying to address are also related to exclusion or to the precarious situation faced by certain minorities on the labour market.

Regardless of how these problems are approached, we tend to come back to these boundaries of exclusion and inclusion. Although the federal government's promotion of multiculturalism and the Quebec government's promotion of cultural convergence (subsequently abandoned in favour of interculture) have been aimed at reconciling, each in their own way, opposing national identities, and although both approaches are limited in terms of explanatory power, they have nonetheless fostered a greater sensitivity towards other groups, sensitivity which may lead to the calling into question of some aspects of established boundaries. In the end, the sociological meaning of concepts is less important than the meaning the public ascribes to them and to the gestures of openness undertaken in their name. However, at the present time, the main problem is that the process has not advanced beyond such gestures. What is still lacking is infrastructure and programs – including linguistic integration and equal access – that are well enough funded and sufficiently tailored to the needs and problems of the immigrant and refugee population to truly make a difference.

There is a dual thrust to all the policies and programs instituted for the benefit of the immigrant population. On the one hand, at the level of discourse, there is a focus on identity. On the other, financial assistance is provided for activities that reflect this discourse on identity and, increasingly, that respond to more immediate problems. This dual thrust in policy

formulation and administration thus apparently aims both high – at building national identities – and low – at the everyday problems experienced by precarious community organizations involved in the self-management of poverty and exclusion. Given that social tension is linked to everyday experiences of isolation and labour market exclusion, it follows that these phenomena should be targeted for intervention, either by strengthening the organizations themselves or by reforming government institutions to make them more responsive to the needs of the immigrant population. There needs to be better cooperation between various government departments aimed at more efficient management of the social problems experienced by immigrants or related to immigration. In cases of discrimination, the need is not to promote greater awareness among non-existent "races," but to apply the provisions of the federal and provincial charters of rights.

The immigration policy statement released in 1990 by the Government of Quebec represents a sweeping attempt to rationalize state management. Its aims are primarily economic, demographic, and linguistic, and include the opening up of Quebec society to the world. The document indicates an awareness of such problems as the exclusion faced by young immigrants, racism in housing, and women's isolation, and it also recognizes that the factors behind this situation are socioeconomic as well as cultural. Among other things, the government wants to promote a better matching of services to needs, equal access to employment (particularly in the public service), greater intercultural understanding, a better understanding among immigrants of Quebec society, and the regionalization and francization of immigrants. The state has no choice but to try to manage in accordance with a rationality based on administrative neutrality and efficiency. The question remains, however, whether it is truly in a position to mend the deep divisions in terms of inequalities that pervade society, since these division are firmly entrenched within its own structure.

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